

# Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

## Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: September 18, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)

Over the past few weeks we are continuing to see a rise of COVID-19 cases on-reserve at a concerning rate and have been saddened at the loss of life related to this pandemic. I offer my sincere condolences to the impacted families and communities during this challenging time. With cases continuing to rise, it is only by our collective efforts that we can flatten the curve and keep each other safe. As of September 16, First Nation cases on reserve in Alberta represent 42% of all cases on reserve in Canada. While I know we have all made many sacrifices over the last six months, I want to stress the importance of limiting social contacts and gatherings, and continuing to follow the other public health measures as the best protection to keep ourselves, our families and communities safe.

### Status Update

**[NEW]** Additional up to date COVID-19 First Nations on-reserve data will now be provided at the end of this document (Appendix A) on an ongoing basis.

#### Number of cases reported\* as of Sept 18, 2020:

*\*numbers are changing rapidly and may change after this bulletin is released*

**Alberta:** There are **1,483 active cases** of COVID-19 in Alberta.

	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)	First Nations On Reserve in Canada (Indigenous Services Canada)	Alberta (Alberta Health)
Confirmed Cases	140,867	541	16,274
Deaths	9,200	9	254
Recovered	123,109	453	14,573

**First Nations living on and off reserve (Alberta):** There are **585** confirmed cases of COVID-19 to date and **10** deaths in First Nations living on and off reserve in Alberta; **160** in Calgary Zone; **134** in Edmonton Zone; **80** in South Zone; **196** in North Zone; **14** in Central zone and **1** unknown.

**Further Information:** Aggregate data on COVID-19 First Nations cases in Alberta is available at: <http://www.afnigc.ca/main/index.php?id=home> and <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>

### First Nations living on reserve in Alberta:



Location (By Zone)	Confirmed Cases	Active Cases	In Hospital	In ICU	Deaths	Recovered
Calgary Zone	55	-	-	-	1	54
South Zone	50	-	-	-	1	49
Central Zone	12	3	-	-	-	9
North Zone	135	56	1	-	2	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>189</b>



### **Testing in Alberta – Update**

- As of Sept 18, 2020, the total number of reported swab samples collected to date in First Nation communities in Alberta is **26,790**.
- **Testing continues to be a powerful tool to help limit the spread.** Testing will prioritize those with symptoms and vulnerable groups at higher risk of getting or spreading COVID-19. Priority testing is available to any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, all close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites and communities with active cases.
- Albertans aged 14 and up can now access the *MyHealth Records (MHR)* tool to see their COVID-19 test results. [Join today](#).
- **[New]** In-community Rapid Testing has begun in Alberta and has initially been launched in one First Nation. **Note:** Rapid Testing is only used in outbreak contexts, with symptomatic individuals and contacts of confirmed cases. It is not used for routine screening purposes.
- **Reminder:** Communities desiring to expand their local testing capacity are encouraged to reach out to FNIHB-AB through local health staff or email: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)

### **[New] Vaccine Watch**

- The Government of Canada announced [new measures](#) to ensure the supply of **vaccines and therapies** against COVID-19. An independent national task force has also been set up to advise the Government on options for Canada's choice of vaccine.
- ISC-AB MOH's are **actively monitoring** the national **COVID-19 vaccine trial** stages and results taking place and will provide updates as they become available.
- ISC-AB is working with First Nation health centers and communities to support the implementation of influenza and pneumococcal **immunization programs this fall** in the midst of COVID-19. Please contact your local health staff or FNIHB-AB for more information.
- In partnership with the First Nations Telehealth network, FNIHB-AB will be hosting a videoconference on September 23, 2020 from 1pm-3pm on the 2020 Influenza Program. Register [here](#).
- ISC has created various **influenza awareness resources** that can be shared, including [posters](#) and [social media posts](#).

### **Alberta's Relaunch- Update**

- Alberta continues in stage two of the provincial relaunch strategy.
- **[New]** Alberta has launched a COVID-19 [school status map](#) to identify the current status of COVID-19 cases in K-12 school across Alberta. Schools with 2 or more confirmed cases will be identified on the map.
- ISC-AB has developed various resources, including a [School Checklist](#) to support communities planning for in-person school programming on-reserve. Additional resources are available on [OneHealth](#).
- ISC-AB Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) and Environmental Public Health Officers (EPHOs) continue to be available to provide public health support for school re-entry and general relaunch.
- All regions in Alberta are to **continue to follow** Alberta's public health measures and guidelines, regardless of relaunch status. More information on the phases of Alberta's relaunch and key public health measures can be found at [Alberta's relaunch strategy](#), [Alberta's Safely Staged COVID-19 Relaunch](#), and [Alberta Biz Connect](#).

### ***What the Government of Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB Are Doing***

- **Reminder:** ISC continues to provide funding to support [access to additional public health measures during COVID-19](#), including increased surge health staffing capacity required to support immunizations, testing etc. For more information on this funding and/or to submit a request for funding, please contact your Community Liaison Team member or email: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)
- **Reminder:** The Government of Canada has launched a national [COVID-19 Tracing App and Self-Assessment](#) Tool, as well as a new [COVID-19 Mobile Alert App](#).
- The next Alberta **COVID-19 First Nations Telehealth session** will be held in Oct [TBC]. Previous telehealth sessions are recorded and are available at: <https://fntn.ca/>.

### ***Mental Health and Wellness- Update***

- *[New]* Windspeaker Radio is airing mental wellness messages 7 days/week at 7:45 am and 9:20 pm. Messages have been developed through the support of many First Nations and feature mental health professionals providing awareness tips and information on suicide prevention resources. Archived messages can found [here](#).
- ISC has announced [\\$82.5 million in mental health and wellness funding to support Indigenous communities adapt and expand mental wellness services](#) to address growing demand in the context of the pandemic. Region-specific funding distribution will be shared as soon as this information becomes available.
- Alberta's [Mental Health and Addiction COVID-19 Community Funding Grant 3rd Call for Proposals](#) opens August, 2020 until November 20,2020 providing up to \$10 million for community initiatives aimed at providing focused, action-oriented mental health and addiction supports and services. First Nations/Indigenous groups are encouraged to apply.

### ***Additional Updates***

- The First Nations Telehealth Network is hosting a **food security session 'Lead, Feed, Share'** with Food Banks Alberta on **Sept 21, 2020** to provide awareness on supports available for food security in First Nation communities. Please register [here](#).
- The next version of this bulletin will be distributed on **Friday, October 2, 2020**.

## ***Additional information***

If you have general questions about COVID-19 or require current information, please refer to the following websites which are trusted information sources and are being regularly maintained and updated. **Should you have questions about COVID-19, please do not hesitate to email: [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca)**

**OneHealth** - <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

**InfoPoint**- By the First Nations Health Managers Association, this site is designed for First Nations health managers in Canada to access credible sources of information and ask questions related to COVID-19. To access this service, call the toll-free number at **1-855-446-2719**, or email [InfoPoint@fnhma.ca](mailto:InfoPoint@fnhma.ca)

### **Alberta Health**

- [Coronavirus info for Albertans https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx)
- [COVID-19 Data for Alberta https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx)

### **Alberta Health Services**

- [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx)
- [https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUpo6\\_wGmSxUc](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17101.aspx?fbclid=IwAR1hzie9aLgDLr0K7Qi80mb9ozNby5dK6VZO3CFhhKgLrALUpo6_wGmSxUc)

### **Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 Updates available in several Indigenous languages**

- <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>
- <https://indigenous.link/indigenous-services-canada/>

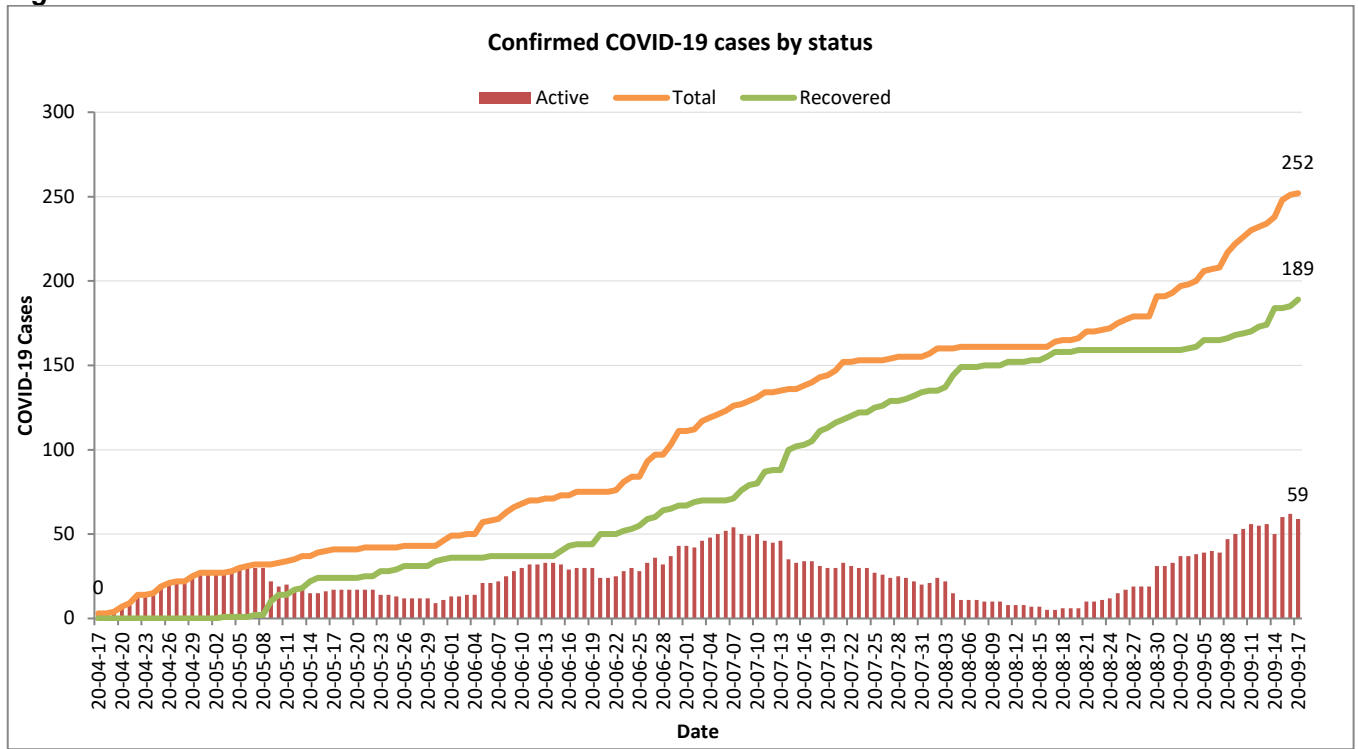
### **Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.**

- The **Alberta Health Services - Indigenous Health Cultural Support Line** provides afterhours support Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 4-8PM. Call toll free at **1-855-735-6766**
- The Mental Health Help Line [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to a free service supporting mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
- Family Violence Resources: <https://www.alberta.ca/family-violence-prevention-resources.aspx>
- **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** is designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction. Text "Open2Change" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe.

**Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for health advice.**

**[New] Appendix A: Additional COVID-19 Data in First Nations On-Reserve in Alberta**

**Fig 1.**



**Fig 2.**

